THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The proposal for deletion of Limestone and Bauxite from Schedule I of the Mines and Minerals (Regulation & Development) Act, 1957, has been discussed in the meetings of the Committee constituted under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Mines) with the Secretaries of State Government, Industry and Indian Bureau of Mines etc. as members to review the Mining Rules and procedures etc. The terms of reference of the Committee, inter-alia include review of the existing laws and procedures governing regulation and development of minerals and to recommend steps to make them compatible with the policy changes and to suggest steps to reduce delays in grant/ renewal of Prospecting Licences/Mining Leases. The Committee is also to consider and suggest further delegation of powers to the State Governments regarding grant/renewal of prospecting Licences/Mining Leases and measures to be taken to prevent illegal mining.

Exploration of Gold in Madhya Pradesh

572. DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether any applications have been received by Government under the Mines Act for exploration of gold in Madhya Pradesh, whether at the state level or at the central level;

(b) if so, which are the applicants and when have they applied;

(c) what is the procedure for disposing off the application under the Mines Act; and

(d) when will these applications be disposed?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) and (b) As per the information furnished by State Govt. of Madhya Pradesh, the following six applications for grant of prospecting licence for Gold & Associated Minerals have been received by the State Govt. of Madhya Pradesh;

Sl. No.	Name of applicant	Date of application to state Government
1.	M/s. Metmin Finance & Holding Ltd.	25.7.1996
2.	M/s. Metmin Finance & Holding Ltd.	24.7.1996
3.	M/s. Ind Agro Synergy Ltd.	04.10.1996
4.	M/s. Ind Agro Synergy Ltd.	04.10.1996
5.	M/s. Metmin Finance & Holding Ltd.	23.7.1997
6.	M/s. Hindustan Zinc Ltd.	22.9.1995

As on date no proposal for grant of mineral concession for gold from State Govt. of Madhya Pradesh is pending with Central Government.

(c) and (d) Mining rights are granted by the concerned State Govenments in accordance with provisions of Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957, and the rules made thereunder. As per the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957, mining rights can be given only to an Indian National or a company defined in sub-section (1) of Section (3) of the 'Companies' Act, 1956. Provided that in respect of any mineral specified in the 1st Schedule of the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957, no prospecting licence or mining lease shall be granted except with the previous approval of the Central Government.